

Ethics and Animals

Fall 2018



Description

This course examines the morality of our treatment of nonhuman animals. We start with a survey of moral theory. Do animals have moral status? Do we have a right to harm or kill some animals in order to benefit or save others? We consider these questions from a variety of moral perspectives, including consequentialism, Kantian ethics, virtue ethics, and feminist ethics. We then apply these ideas to different kinds of animal use. For example, what is the morality of our treatment of animals in food, research, captivity, and the wild? Finally, we will explore ethical questions that arise for animal activists, including about what ends they should pursue, what means they should take towards those ends, and how they should relate to other social movements.

General Information

Time: T 5:00–7:30

Place: GCASL 275

Instructor:

Name: Jeff Sebo

Email: jeffsebo@nyu.edu

Office: 285 Mercer #908

Office Hours: M 3-5pm

Teaching Assistant:

Name: Valerie McCarthy

Email: vwm210@nyu.edu

Office: 285 Mercer #1007

Office Hours: T 12-2pm

Readings

The required books for this class are: Julia Driver, *Ethics: The Fundamentals*; Lori Gruen, *Ethics and Animals*; and Gary Francione & Robert Garner, *The Animal Rights Debate*. These books are available online, and the Gruen and Francione & Garner books are also available for free at the NYU library website. All readings not from the required books will be posted on the course website.

Grading

Your grades will be determined as follows:

- **Papers (75%)**: You will write three papers explaining and evaluating the ideas and arguments discussed in class. You will email this paper to animaethics18@gmail.com. For each paper, you can either create your own prompt (provided that you clear it with us in advance) or select from prompts that we create. The papers will each be 1,500 words, and will each count for 25% of your final grade. Paper 1 will be due at the end of the day on 10/7, Paper 2 will be due at the end of the day on 11/11, and Paper 3 will be due at the end of the day on 12/16.
- **Weekly Writing (15%)**: Prior to each session, you will send an email to animaethics18@gmail.com with the subject heading Last Name Date (e.g. Smith 9/12) that briefly (a) summarizes one of the main ideas in at least two of the four readings and (b) presents a question or comment about this idea or these ideas. This assignment is due no later than 4:30pm on the day of class and will be graded Pass/Fail.
- **Attendance and Participation (10%)**: We expect regular attendance and thoughtful participation from all students. Our assessment of the quality of your performance on these items will account for 10% of your grade in this class.

Policies

- **Late Papers/Extensions/Incompletes**: Late papers will lose 1/3 letter grade for each day late. Late DW assignments will be accepted for half credit up until the start of class. Extensions and incompletes will be granted only in exceptional circumstances. If you want to request either, please do so in advance.
- **Academic Dishonesty**: Plagiarism results in failure in the class and referral to an academic dean. Plagiarism includes: copying sentences or fragments from any source without quotes or references; not citing every source used in your papers; citing internet information without proper citation; presenting someone else's work as your own; or copying verbatim from any source. You are subject to the CAS guidelines on plagiarism: cas.nyu.edu/page/ug.academicintegrity.
- **Academic Accommodations**: Academic accommodations are available to any student with a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility, learning disability, or who is deaf or hard of hearing. Students should please register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980.

NYU Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities
726 Broadway, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10003-6675
Voice/TTY Fax: 212-995-4114
Web site: <http://www.nyu.edu/csd>

Schedule

- **9/4 - Introduction**

- Mary Midgley, "Getting animals in focus"
- Dale Jamieson, "Human morality"

- **9/11 - Value**

- Lori Gruen, "The natural and the normative"
- Peter Singer, "All animals are equal"
- Mary Midgley, "The significance of species"
- Dale Jamieson, "The value of nature," pp. 145-168

- **9/18 - Duty**

- Julia Driver, "Utilitarianism and consequentialism," pp. 40-51, 61-79
- Gaverick Matheny, "Utilitarianism and animals"
- Julia Driver, "Kantian ethics"
- Christine Korsgaard, "A Kantian case for animal rights"

- **9/25 - Virtue**

- Julia Driver, "Virtue ethics"
- Rosalind Hursthouse, "Applying virtue ethics to our treatment of other animals"
- Julia Driver, "Feminist ethics"
- Deane Curtin, "Toward an ecological ethic of care"

- **10/2 - Justice**

- Julia Driver, "Social contract theory"
- Peter Carruthers, "Contractualism and animals"
- Alasdair Cochrane, "Liberalism and animals"
- Alasdair Cochrane, "Communitarianism and animals"

- **10/16 - Minds**

- David DeGrazia, "What animals are like"
- Sahar Akhtar, "Animal pain and welfare"
- Jeff Sebo, "Agency and moral status"
- Michael Tooley, "Are nonhuman animals persons?"

- **10/23 - Connections**

- Carol Adams, "Masked violence, muted voices"
- Mel Chen, "Queer animality," pp. 89-115
- Syl Ko, "Notes from the border of the human-animal divide"
- Sunaura Taylor, "All animals are equal (but some are more equal than others)"

- **10/30 - Animals in food**

- Lori Gruen, "Eating animals"
- David J. Wolfson and Mariann Sullivan, "Foxes in the hen house"
- Mark Budolfson, "Is it wrong to eat meat from factory farms? If so, why?"
- Lori Gruen and Robert Jones, "Veganism as an aspiration"

- **11/6 - Animals in research**

- Lori Gruen, "Experimenting with animals"
- Baruch Brody, "Defending animal research: an international perspective"
- Robert Bass, "Lives in the balance: utilitarianism and animal research"
- Tom Regan, "Empty cages: animal rights and vivisection"

- **11/13 - Animals in captivity**

- Lori Gruen, "Dilemmas of captivity"
- Alexandra Horowitz, "Companion and captive"
- Rod Preece and Lorna Chamberlain, "Animals in entertainment," 161-184
- Alasdair Cochrane, "Animals and cultural practices"

- **11/20 - Animals in the wild**

- Lori Gruen, "Animals in the wild"
- Russel Powell, "On the nature of species and the moral significance of their extinction"
- Clare Palmer, "Against the view that we are normally required to assist wild animals"
- Oscar Horta, "Debunking the idyllic view of natural processes"

- **11/27 - The ends of animal activism**

- Sue Donaldson & Will Kymlicka, "An expanded theory of animal rights," 40-69
- Wayne Gabardi, "The next social contract," 145-74
- Kimberly Smith, "Representation"
- Kimberly Smith, "Reform"

- **12/4 - The means of animal activism**

- Gary Francione, "The abolition of animal exploitation," pp. 25-62
- Robert Garner, "A defense of broad animal protectionism," pp. 82-113
- Steven Best & Anthony Nocella II, "Behind the mask," pp. 23-43
- Lauren Gazzola, "Political captivity"

- **12/11 - The scope of animal activism**

- Emily Gaarder, "Women and the animal rights movement," 95-107, 117-129
- Julie Guthman, "The unbearable whiteness of alternative food"
- Aph Ko, "Creating a new conceptual architecture"
- David Nibert, "Toward a united struggle against oppression"